

T O P S E C R E T

IN 10125

TOR 28/1555Z FEB 66 FJC

25X1A

25X1A **T O P S E C R E T** 272218Z

25X1A PRIORITY INFO CITE

25X1A

25X1A

IDEALIST

25X1A

REF A.

B.

(NOT SENT)

25X1A

25X1A

FOR FROM MR. CUNNINGHAM, ACTING

1. REGARDING YOUR RECOMMENDATION THAT HQS GROUNDING BE
LIFTED 28 FEB, AND THAT NORMAL OPNS AT BE RESUMED 1
MARCH, HQS CANNOT CONCUR AT THIS TIME FOR FOLL REASONS:

25X1A

A. AT PRESENT TIME, 27/2200Z, SEARCH PARTY HAS NOT LOCATED
SUFFICIENT STRUCTURAL WRECKAGE TO PERMIT ANALYSIS OF
FAILURE CAUSES. AS NOTED REF B, BAD WX IN SEARCH AREA IN
FOOTHILLS, WITH VISIBILITY DOWN TO ABOUT 50 FEET, HAS
DRASTICALLY LIMITED EFFECTIVE SEARCH. PORTIONS OF ENGINE
WERE FOUND BEFORE DARK ON 26 FEB, BUT NO SIGN OF WINGS AND
FUSELAGE OR TAIL SECTION. SEARCH WILL CONTINUE UNTIL
ENOUGH WRECKAGE IS FOUND TO ENABLE INVESTIGATION BE MEANING-
FUL.

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T O P S E C R E T
IN 1092

TOP SECRET

IN 18195

25X1A CITE [REDACTED]

25X1A

B. GEN LEDFORD AND [REDACTED], WHO VISITED [REDACTED] AFTER ACCIDENT, LEFT WITH NO FIRM CONCLUSION ABOUT WHAT MAY HAVE CAUSED WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOME FORM OF CATASTROPHIC FAILURE. ORIGINAL THOUGHT WAS THAT PILOT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN JET WASH AFTER REFUELING BREAKOFF, BUT AFTER HIS AND TANKER CREW DEBRIEFING, THIS POSSIBILITY RULED OUT. THEREFORE, NO WAY OF TELLING IF CAUSE OF RIGHT WING FAILURE, APPARENTLY ALL WAY TO WING ROOT, COULD BE COMMON TO REST OF FLEET. 342 WAS OUR OLDEST BIRD, AND HAD SUSTAINED LANDING ACCIDENT [REDACTED] SOME TIME AGO WITH MAJOR STRUCTURAL REPAIR THEREAFTER, SO THIS FACT MUST BE EXAMINED IN EVIDENCE AS WELL.

25X1A

25X1A

2. PILOT HAD REPORTEDLY REFERRED TO "GUSTS" AND "VIBRATION" OF SOME SORT PRIOR TO ACFT BREAKUP, BUT SINCE HQS HAS NOT HEARD DEBRIEFING AS YET, CAN ONLY ADD THESE ITEMS TO LIST OF UNKNOWN AT MOMENT. IN ANY EVENT, FOR US TO RESUME FLIGHTS WITHOUT SOME BETTER HANDLE ON POSSIBLE PROBLEM COMMONALITY THAN WE HAVE NOW WOULD APPEAR UNWISE, SINCE ANY ACCIDENT FOR WHATEVER REASON WHERE PILOT MIGHT BE KILLED WOULD LEAD TO SUPPOSITION THAT TWO WERE SOMEHOW CONNECTED.

3. SUGGEST YOUR EXPLANATION TO [REDACTED] AND OTHERS BE IN LOW KEY THAT FURTHER FLIGHTS UNTIL WRECKAGE

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25X1A

IN 18195

TOP SECRET

T O P S E C R E T

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25X1A

CITE

342 LOCATED WOULD NOT BE ADOPTING BEST CONSERVATIVE COURSE.
WILL KEEP YOU IN THE LOOP AS DEVELOPMENTS OCCUR AND WILL
DISCUSS WHOLE MATTER WITH GEN. LEDFORD ON HIS RETURN
28 FEB.

END OF MSG

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IN 18196

T O P S E C R E T